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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USOSCE 000061

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TAGS: [KCFE](#) [OSCE](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: CFE/JCG: MARCH 24: RUSSIA CRITICIZES, BUT U.S.
DOESN'T TAKE THE BAIT

Classified By: Charge d' Affairs a.i. Hugh Neighbour,
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Summary: At the March 24 JCG plenary, Russia apologized for its having missed the March 10 JCG meeting due to heavy traffic. Russia also attempted, to no avail, to ensnare the U.S. delegation in a debate over who really was ready to resume negotiations on the parallel actions package. The Chair requested delegations agree next week to cancel the April 28 JCG plenary since many delegations plan to be in Brussels that day for an HLTF meeting. End Summary.

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Russia Glad No One Cancelled CFE When It Wasn't Looking
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12. (SBU) The Joint Consultative Group (JCG) met on March 24 under the Chairmanship of Germany (Richter). Russia (Ulyanov) immediately took the floor to apologize for its having missed the March 10 JCG plenary due to heavy traffic. Ulyanov joked that he was pleased "no one had cancelled CFE" or "taken new measures," something he said the UN Security Council once did when no Russian representative was present.

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Russia Says It Has Waited Almost Two Years
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13. (SBU) Russia (Ulyanov) used today's meeting to respond to the U.S. statement (JCG.JOUR/690/Annex) from March 10. Inter alia, in that statement the U.S. pointed out that 29 States Parties continued to implement the CFE Treaty and urged the Russian Federation to work cooperatively with concerned CFE States to reach an agreement on the basis of the parallel actions package. Ulyanov noted his "amazement" with such appeals made to Russia to engage constructively. Ulyanov noted that failure to act on the parallel actions package was not because of Russia's "lack of goodwill," but because no U.S.-Russia meetings had taken place. Ulyanov noted that Russia has been "waiting over one and a half years" for its American colleagues to resume negotiations. Ulyanov said Russia was ready to resume negotiations either "here in Vienna this week, or next week in Moscow." He said

Russia was interested in "when and where" the U.S. would be willing to meet. Ulyanov stressed, a bit sarcastically, whether the U.S. would really "put into action" exactly what it was asking Russia to do.

¶4. (SBU) The U.S. (Neighbour) replied it would convey the Russian delegation's statement to Washington and said, without going into details, that the U.S. assessment of the previous 18 months was substantially different. Neighbour observed that the change of U.S. administration has had an impact on a range of issues, including CFE, and that it could be some weeks before top U.S. arms control officials were in place. Neighbour recalled the positive March 6 meeting in Geneva between Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov, who had an exchange on arms control in the context of their tour d' horizon.

¶5. (SBU) The Chair (Richter) underscored that Russia's absence during the March 10 JCG plenary should not be misinterpreted as a "political signal."

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April 28 JCG Likely Will be Cancelled
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¶6. (SBU) The Chair (Richter) announced that the next HLTF was planned for April 28, the same day that a JCG plenary is scheduled. Richter recommended cancelling the April 28 JCG plenary as a large number of delegations were planning to be in Brussels for the HLTF. No delegation took the floor to express any objection to the Chair's proposal. Absent any

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objection, the April 28 JCG will be cancelled at the next JCG plenary on March 31.

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Turkey Seeks Allies' Opinion on Joint Moldovan-Russian Statement
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¶7. (C) During the JCG-T Plus 4, chaired by Belgium (Kenes), and which met immediately prior to the JCG plenary today, Turkey (Begic) called attention to the joint Moldovan-Russian statement, wherein Moldova described the Russian peacekeeping forces in Transdnistria as "a stabilizing factor." Turkey said it was happy that Moldova was making progress on this matter, but would have been happier to know in advance that there would be a joint Moldova-Russia statement. The Chair (Kenes) noted that many capitals were studying the statement, and suggested that even the Moldovans may now be "realizing what they have committed."

¶8. (C) Germany (Richter) said it helps to look back at the Istanbul Commitments document, in particular paragraph 18 of the Istanbul Summit Declaration, which he quoted: "we recognize positive role of peacekeepers for ensuring the stability in the region." Richter cautioned that we have to view this in the light of making a clear distinction between "peacekeepers and regular forces." The Chair (Kenes) noted that "host nation consent" is crucial. Turkey (Begic) said that its interpretation of the Istanbul Commitments was similar to that of Germany, but that a clear definition was still lacking. Begic said if for nothing else, at least the "Moldovans were solving this on behalf of the Alliance."

¶9. (C) Romania (Matei) noted that it was studying the statement and could not yet give a final opinion. Matei suggested a "cautious approach," and stressed that we did not have to rush to a final conclusion. Germany (Richter) also supported a cautious approach. Richter said Germany did not want to reopen the debate in the JCG, but recalled that Germany had issued a paper some time ago in an attempt to define Istanbul Commitments. Peacekeepers in Transdnistria

was a "case in point."

U.S. Approach to March 25 Security Dialogue in FSC

¶10. (C) Under any other business, the U.S. (Neighbour) briefed Allies on U.S. views regarding Russia's intention to raise the re-opening of Vienna Document 99 during the March 25 FSC Security Dialogue. The U.S. (Neighbour) said the U.S. position was unchanged, but in light of the transitioning administration and focus on "resetting" U.S.-Russia relations, the U.S. wanted to refrain from debating again proposals that had not received much traction in the past, e.g., CSBMs on naval forces. Neighbour said the U.S. would ask Russia to raise specific concerns that it had and indicate how re-opening VD99 could address those concerns. Neighbour also said that the U.S. would say it was surprised VD99 was not working well for Russia, as Ulyanov had alleged, since Russia has been one of the most enthusiastic implementers of the document, more than all Allies combined.

Next Meeting

¶11. (U) The next JCG Plenary will be on March 31 under the Chairmanship of Germany. The next JCG-T will be on March 30, chaired by Bulgaria.
NEIGHBOUR